United Nations S/2011/255

Security Council

Distr.: General
5 April 2011

Original: English

Small arms

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

In his 2008 report on small arms (S/2008/258), the Secretary-General provided an overview of the negative impact of illicit small arms on security, human rights and social and economic development, in particular in areas of conflict. The report indicated that the issue of small arms could not be addressed with arms control measures alone; such measures needed to be part of a wider spectrum of policy solutions in which security, crime, human rights, health and development intersected.

The present report builds on the previous one and brings the Security Council up to date on a number of topics that require its particular attention. These include trade and brokering, marking, record-keeping and tracing of weapons, stockpile management, armed violence and the use and misuse of small arms. Special attention is given to the trade in ammunition, problems connected with storage and the importance of tracing ammunition found in conflict settings.

In considering problems relating to the unregulated circulation of small arms, it remains essential to focus on integrated policy approaches. The changing nature of armed violence, including where the United Nations has been active in peace operations, post-conflict reconstruction or development assistance, has blurred the line between armed conflict and crime, and between politically motivated and economically motivated violence. Peacekeeping and peacebuilding activities and development assistance require planning for small arms control and armed violence reduction as a priority. In such contexts, it is vital that traditional arms control measures be integrated into interventions that target the demand for weapons and enhance the ability of security providers and governance authorities to strengthen community security, manage conflict and mitigate violence.

11-28972 (E) 190411

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I. Introduction

1. In a statement by its President dated 29 June 2007 (S/PRST/2007/24), the Security Council underlined the need to address the issue of small arms and requested that, I submit to the Council, on a biennial basis beginning in 2008, a report on that issue containing my analysis, observations and recommendations as well as my observations on the implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. The first report (S/2008/258), was submitted to the Council on 17 April 2008. The present report is the second submitted in response to the Council's request.

II. The issue of small arms

2. Since my previous report, there have been a number of developments in the area of small arms that require the Council's particular attention. The present report focuses on such topics as trade and brokering, marking, record-keeping and tracing of weapons, stockpile management, armed violence and the use and misuse of small arms.

3. As requested by the Council, the present report concludes with observations on the implementation of the Programme of Action.

Trade and brokering

4. The value of the global authorized trade in small arms and light weapons and their ammunition is estimated at more than $7 billion per year. The value of undocumented trade cannot be determined with any specificity, but may run in the billions as well.[1] However, total transaction revenues tell only part of the story; countries often sell ageing and surplus arms for a fraction of their real value or give them away.

5. In recent decades, the arms trade has seen a shift from mostly direct contact between Government officials or agents to the ubiquitous use of private intermediaries, who operate in a particularly globalized environment, often from multiple locations. Contemporary traders, agents, brokers, shippers and financiers regularly combine their activities, making it difficult to clearly distinguish small arms trade from brokering and related activities (see A/62/163). It appears that many countries have not enacted specific laws or regulations covering arms brokering within their systems of arms export control and it is often unclear whether such activities are covered under other laws.[2]

6. The trade in small arms is not well regulated and can be considered the least transparent of all weapons systems. In many countries, because of a lack of regulation and controls, it is too easy for small arms to fall into the hands of recipients who use them to commit violations of international humanitarian or human rights law or divert them to the illicit market through theft, leakage, corruption or pilferage. The illicit trade in small arms and their ammunition wreaks

[1] See *Small Arms Survey 2011* (forthcoming).

[2] *Developing a Mechanism to Prevent Illicit Brokering in Small Arms and Light Weapons: Scope and Implications* (United Nations publication, Sales No. GV.E.06.0.17).

havoc everywhere: mobs terrorize neighbourhoods; rebels attack civilians or peacekeepers; drug lords randomly kill law enforcement officials or anyone else interfering with their unlawful business; and bandits hijack humanitarian aid convoys. Uncontrolled small arms are a persistent problem on all continents.

7. The United Nations is confronted with lax controls on the small arms trade in many parts of the world. Whether it is promoting sustainable development, protecting human rights, carrying out peacekeeping efforts, delivering food aid, improving public health, advancing gender equality, building safer cities, protecting forcibly displaced persons or fighting crime and terrorism, the Organization faces armed violence, conflict and civil unrest involving violations of international law, abuses of the rights of children, civilian casualties, humanitarian crises and missed social and economic opportunities.

Trade in ammunition

8. Many States procure their ammunition for small arms and light weapons domestically. Cartridges are produced all over the world, including in at least 11 African countries. Nevertheless, the international trade in ammunition remains considerable, and the average annual value of authorized international transfers of small arms and light weapons ammunition is conservatively estimated at $4.3 billion.[3]

9. Ammunition supply patterns in areas of conflict are often distinct from arms supply patterns. Small arms, which are often recycled from conflict to conflict, typically have a lifespan of several decades; however, their value depends on an uninterrupted supply of ammunition.

10. The extent of the destruction caused by unregulated ammunition flows has become increasingly evident. Expert panels monitoring Security Council arms embargoes have suggested that the popularity of certain types of weapons among armed groups corresponds to the availability of their ammunition (see S/2010/91). Conversely, reports have shown that, in some cases, lack of ammunition has prompted combatants to seek to resolve their disputes peacefully.[3] Preventing resupply in situations of high risk to civilian populations should be a priority.

11. The Security Council has consistently taken an inclusive approach to arms and ammunition and has included the issue of ammunition in its discussions on arms embargoes, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, child soldiers, counter-terrorism and the protection of civilians in armed conflict.[4] Arms and ammunition are also considered jointly in other contexts, including drugs and crime, peacebuilding, women and peace and security, development, human rights, mine action, air transport, maritime safety and border controls. Importantly, most countries do not distinguish arms export legislation from ammunition export legislation. In sum, because of its particular characteristics, the trade in ammunition

[3] See *Small Arms Survey 2010: gangs, groups and guns* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010).

[4] See the reports on the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/2010/596), the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (S/2010/571), Somalia (S/2010/91) and Côte d'Ivoire (S/2010/179). See also the reports on Guinea-Bissau (S/2010/550), Lebanon (S/2010/538), the protection of civilians in armed conflict (S/2010/579) and children and armed conflict in Chad (S/2011/64).

should be a key component of any discussion on the regulation of the global arms trade.

Marking and tracing

12. Most weapons carry markings that identify them uniquely and chronicle their history from production to the last legal owner. Through the United Nations Firearms Protocol and the International Tracing Instrument,[5] countries have made various commitments related to the marking and tracing of small arms. Uniquely marked weapons make it possible to detect breaches of arms embargoes and diversion. How weapons arrive in conflict or post-conflict environments should be carefully monitored by those wishing to develop effective measures against illicit flows and the uncontrolled circulation of arms.

13. Panels of experts monitoring arms embargoes check the serial numbers of recovered weapons with the authorities in the country of production, which subsequently ban the arms brokers responsible for the diversion of the shipment from entering into further contracts (see, for example, S/2003/937). This demonstrates that tracing weapons can effectively help to combat the illicit trade in small arms. However, weapons often cannot be traced, because officials are unfamiliar with markings, it is not possible to accurately identify a weapon type or model, or there is a lack of adequate records. Sometimes, serial numbers of weapons presented by an armed group for inspection have been erased by grinding, indicating that either the armed group or the supplier of the weapons did not wish them to be traced (see S/2009/521). The tracing of weapons in conflict situations is uncommon and is usually limited to the activities of United Nations embargo-monitoring groups and certain research organizations.[6] However, tracing can be critical in identifying leakages in a State's security apparatus and in revealing where the security of weapons and ammunition needs to be improved.

14. Weapons owned by peacekeeping missions have also been diverted. Effective tracing, based on sound record-keeping systems, may help to identify weapons diverted from peacekeeping forces and highlight possible weaknesses in their arms management.

15. Post-conflict weapons collection programmes should record weapons in sufficient detail to permit effective tracing when diversion is suspected. The purpose of recording collected weapons is to ensure accounting and accountability as well as the proper disposal of each weapon, preferably by destruction. If recorded accurately, the information can be used to identify illicit transfers to parties during a conflict; to produce a baseline of the types of weapons present in the area and thereby facilitate the identification of any subsequent batches of weapons; to verify the destruction of weapons collected during arms reduction initiatives; to monitor possible arms and ammunition losses from peacekeeping forces; and to facilitate the recovery of lost or stolen weapons.

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[5] Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime; the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons.

[6] See *Small Arms Survey 2009: shadows of war* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2009).

16. Between 1998 and 2008, the United Nations and associated entities collected more than 300,000 weapons and kept records of most of them.[6] These records could help to improve the understanding of the illicit trade in weapons and facilitate the monitoring of progress made by countries recovering from conflict and the efficacy of arms reduction initiatives.

17. In accordance with the Organization's Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards, weapons record-keeping has become a formal part of these disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes whose disarmament component is the responsibility of the United Nations.[7] The Standards require the documentation of basic information needed to identify and trace each weapon. However, many weapons record-keeping systems do not include the key elements, namely, make, model, calibre, serial number and country of manufacture.

18. Record-keeping systems should be designed in such a way as to ensure that personnel are aware of the types of information that they need to record. To that end, brief training in compiling records of collected weapons is sufficient. The International Small Arms Control Standards, currently being developed by the United Nations, include practical guidance on weapons collection and on marking, record-keeping and tracing.[8] The International Small Arms Control Standards will be fully compatible with the Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards.

19. Lastly, weapons collection records are valuable evidence; if they are to be of use, however, an expert must analyse them to confirm their accuracy and identify significant trends in the distribution of weapons. System redesign, basic training and expert analysis thus may serve as three pillars underpinning improved record-keeping and tracing efforts in which the United Nations is involved.

20. The confidence of local populations in weapons-collection processes remains crucial to their success. Efforts to identify and trace surrendered arms should always reinforce that confidence.

Tracing ammunition

21. Because ammunition does not usually have unique markings, cartridges are more difficult to trace than small arms. Most often, small arms ammunition bears a headstamp with a factory and production year code. The serial number of the lot or batch which may include thousands of cartridges, is typically marked on the packaging of that lot or batch. When the serial number is available because the packaging has been found, it may still be difficult to ascertain a point of diversion. Ammunition from the same, identically marked lot may have reached multiple customers, which hinders the identification of a single point of diversion.

22. Monitoring flows of the military-style ammunition generally used in armed conflict offers a greater scope for identifying sources, trafficking patterns and diversion points than monitoring ammunition for handguns and pistols. This is because production and supply chains in military markets are distinctly different

[7] See www.unddr.org/iddrs.

[8] See www.un-casa-isacs.org.

from civilian markets. If large numbers of ammunition are found, a process of elimination may lead to likely sources of diversion.[9]

23. Ammunition marked with its production year remains a critical element in monitoring the implementation of Security Council arms embargoes. Panels of experts tasked with such monitoring rely on recovered ammunition to determine whether it was transferred to embargoed actors or destinations after the imposition of the embargo.

24. Staff of peacekeeping missions with embargo-monitoring mandates need further training in the correct recording of information from recovered ammunition. Such training could be targeted at the mission personnel most likely to encounter ammunition, including members of an embargo monitoring cell, military observers and police personnel. Just as with records of weapon markings, the collected information could then be made available to arms embargo monitoring groups. In that context, I welcome the efforts of the Group of Experts on Côte d'Ivoire, which has provided assistance to the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) Embargo Cell in its efforts to improve the technical capacity of the Operation's military observers and police personnel charged with conducting inspections of military facilities (see S/2009/521).

25. In addition, expert panels that monitor arms embargoes would be aided in their work if Member States provided information about the markings applied to ammunition for small arms and light weapons by producers under their jurisdiction and the markings on ammunition recovered from illicit use.

26. The systematic collection, adequate recording and publication of information concerning the markings on recovered illicit ammunition for small arms and light weapons would enhance transparency and accountability in the arms and ammunition trade and help significantly to limit the scope of the illicit trade.

Stockpiles

27. As indicated in my previous report, stockpile management and control has emerged as one of the greatest challenges relating to small arms. Government warehouses remain prominent sources of illegal small arms in circulation. To a considerable extent, this is a matter of managing surpluses. Of the 200 million modern military firearms in the arsenals of State armed forces, at least 76 million can be considered surplus and, therefore, priority items for destruction.[10]

28. In post-conflict settings, the immediate destruction of surplus weapons and ammunition removes a possible source of new instability and builds confidence at a critical time. What is more, properly securing and maintaining stockpiles require funding and organizational capacity, which are often scarce in post-conflict settings and divert resources from urgently needed recovery and development efforts. The public destruction of surplus arms may serve as an effective confidence- and security-building measure.

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[9] James Bevan, ed., *Conventional Ammunition in Surplus: A Reference Guide* (Small Arms Survey Switzerland, 2008).

[10] See *Small Arms Survey 2008: risk and resilience* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2008).

Ammunition stockpiles

29. The management and control of stockpiles of conventional ammunition continues to pose an acute twofold problem. Over the past decades, widespread, unintended explosive events relating to poorly stored or managed ammunition stockpiles have affected more than 50 countries, resulting in high numbers of casualties, severe destruction to infrastructure and the environment, and disruption of the livelihoods of entire communities.

30. Unsecured or poorly monitored national ammunition stockpiles also seem to account for a substantial percentage of global diversion into illicit markets. A readily available source of ammunition can be a key factor in the protraction and escalation of armed conflict, as well as in terrorism, crime and other forms of armed violence. Significantly, diverted conventional ammunition, in particular that of a larger calibre, is increasingly being used to assemble improvised explosive devices, including booby traps, improvised mines, roadside bombs and armour-piercing projectiles.

31. The loss of ammunition by a soldier often goes unnoticed or can be explained without difficulty to superiors, in contrast to the loss of a firearm. Ammunition loss can lead to considerable diversion flows. Well-orchestrated forms of diversion originating higher up the command chain, which may result in large illicit transfers of ammunition, are of even greater concern. Corruption, negligence, the absence of end-user verification and poorly implemented border controls all contribute to habitual stockpile diversion and illicit ammunition flows in many parts of the world.

32. Expert groups monitoring United Nations arms embargoes noted years ago that the lack of basic accountability systems was a factor in the diversion of ammunition (see S/2006/525). The severity of ammunition proliferation in violation of Security Council arms embargoes has been underlined in various reports by Council committees, monitoring groups and panels of experts (see S/2010/596, S/2010/571, S/2010/179, S/2010/91 and S/2009/689). In one case, the Security Council recommended that stockpile security, accountability and management of arms and ammunition be promoted "as an urgent priority" (see Council resolution 1952 (2010)).

33. Effective stockpile management and security should be priorities in any peacekeeping mission. Ammunition confiscated in the course of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes requires specialized handling and management. Poorly managed stockpiles of conventional ammunition in danger of explosion place peacekeeping personnel and others at risk; the possible diversion of such ammunition for use in renewed hostilities poses another hazard.[11]

34. Improving the whole-life management of conventional ammunition stockpiles requires action at the national, regional and global levels. For its part, the United Nations is finalizing international ammunition technical guidelines for use on a voluntary basis by Member States.[12] I encourage Member States and relevant United

[11] See Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standard 4.10.

[12] In accordance with the recommendation of the report of the 2008 Group of Governmental Experts established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 61/72 to consider further steps to enhance cooperation with regard to the issue of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus (see A/63/182).

Nations entities to make use of these guidelines, which should be available later in 2011, to increase relevant stockpile management capacities.

Arms embargoes

35. The Security Council applies mandatory sanctions, such as economic and trade sanctions, travel bans, financial or diplomatic restrictions and arms embargoes, to exert pressure on a State or entity to comply with the objectives set by the Council without resorting to the use of force. Under arms embargoes, Member States are typically banned from selling or supplying arms and related materiel, including ammunition, to targeted States or entities. Ten arms embargoes imposed by the Security Council are currently in place; they are overseen by sanctions committees, with enhanced monitoring provided by panels of experts established by the Council and appointed by the Secretary-General.

36. In my previous report, I noted that sanctions monitoring groups or panels of experts established by the Security Council often faced practical challenges, such as a lack of capacity to electronically process and analyse their findings and relate those findings to data collected by monitoring groups under other sanctions regimes. I am pleased to note that since that time, the Secretariat has introduced an electronic data management system that brings together both metadata and source documentation collected by the various monitoring groups, thereby improving the institutional memory of those groups and facilitating analysis across groups and sanctions regimes. In another positive development, the Arrangement on Cooperation between the International Criminal Police Organization — INTERPOL and the United Nations in relation to the United Nations Security Council Sanctions Committees supplementary to the Cooperation Agreement between the International Criminal Police Organization — INTERPOL and the United Nations, signed in October 2009, provides for enhanced exchange of information, including on documentation accumulated by monitoring groups that may be of use to the investigative authorities of Member States. To reinforce these trends, the Security Council may wish to encourage a strengthening of practical cooperation among relevant Council sanctions monitoring groups, peacekeeping missions, Member States and their investigative authorities, as well as relevant regional and international organizations.

Arms embargoes and peacekeeping

37. Four peacekeeping missions, namely, UNOCI, the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) and the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) have been mandated by the Security Council to assist in monitoring the implementation of arms embargoes or of the arms provisions of peace agreements. In addition, MONUSCO and UNOCI are mandated to collect or seize arms and related materiel in breach of sanctions and to dispose of them in an appropriate manner.

38. In Liberia, UNMIL monitors the trafficking of drugs and light weapons and undertakes inspections of weapons and ammunition brought into the country under exemptions granted by the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1521 (2003) concerning Liberia. UNMIL also reports regularly to the

Committee on the inspection of deliveries of equipment conducted by the Mission at the point of entry, and shares such information with the Panel of Experts on Liberia.

39. While noting the progress made by UNMIL in fulfilling its small-arms-related mandates, the Panel of Experts recommended the creation of a United Nations police database listing the arms embargo exemption requests granted by the Committee and a computerized database on weapons and ammunition found by UNMIL, with a view to better estimating the origin and extent of the external military support that fuelled the civil war (see S/2009/640).

40. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, MONUSCO maintains a database on small arms and light weapons collected from armed groups, although the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo has indicated that its data entry needs to be improved if the information is to be useful in tracing. The Group recommended that the Mission's mandate be expanded to include the maintenance of a database listing the serial numbers and locations of all State-owned small arms, and that the Mission create a database containing all available information on the weapons and ammunition under its custody. It also recommended the inspection of the arms or ammunition depots of the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo for dangerous stocks and equipment, such as landmines and cluster munitions, and the strengthening of the Mission's inspection capacity in connection with its arms embargo monitoring mandate (see S/2009/603).

41. UNOCI is the only peacekeeping mission with an integrated embargo cell combining civilian, police and military expertise. The Embargo Cell provides the Group of Experts on Côte d'Ivoire with both administrative and substantive support, and facilitates meetings between the Group and Ivorian officials.

42. The Group of Experts recommended that UNOCI create a database on weapons destroyed and weapons imported under the exemptions provided by the terms of the arms embargo.

43. The Panel of Experts on the Sudan noted that UNAMID had no internal system for recording the arms and military materiel brought into Darfur under its arms embargo exemption, which would be essential in identifying losses or leakages from stockpiles. While no formal disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme for Darfur has been established to date, the Panel recommended that UNAMID create an internal register of weapons, to be made accessible to the Panel and to UNAMID staff monitoring the arms embargo, in order to effectively address loss or diversion.

44. In my previous report, one of the recommendations concerning arms embargoes was that cooperation between panels of experts and peacekeeping missions be increased. While the roles, responsibilities and objectives of expert panels and peacekeeping operations differ, it remains vital that information-sharing, cooperation and synergy of efforts between them be further enhanced.

Armed violence

45. It is often difficult to distinguish between large-scale political violence and the organized predatory behaviour of groups operating in the same setting, which is frequently facilitated by elite patrons and the absence of basic State control and the rule of law. Somalia is one of the most dismal examples, but similar patterns can be found from Haiti to Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the

Sudan. Participating in an armed group, whether for political reasons or not, provides young men with a livelihood and perceived legitimacy that public authorities and the formal private sector may not offer.

46. More evidence-based approaches to addressing the causes and consequences of armed violence are urgently required. Through disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes and small arms control measures, it is often difficult to redress the criminal violence that frequently replaces political violence in the post-conflict period.[13] In such environments, weapons collection measures and related activities need to be accompanied by development programming geared towards preventing and reducing armed violence, as well as other measures to enhance the protection of the civilian population.

47. I continue to support the 2006 Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development,[14] in particular because the States that have endorsed it have committed to linking small arms control with armed violence reduction, respect for human rights and sustainable development. The Declaration, which is open to all Member States, aims to promote measurable reductions in armed violence worldwide, as well as tangible improvements in human security by 2015. I have indicated that the development of measurable goals on reducing armed violence by 2015 will make it possible to integrate security-related themes into the follow-up to the Millennium Development Goals.

48. Since then, I have been requested by the General Assembly to report on reducing poverty and promoting development through the reduction and prevention of armed violence (see A/64/228). The concept of armed violence as described in the present report is also relevant to the work of the Security Council, since it encompasses the spectrum of criminal and interpersonal (including gender-based) violence in conflict and post-conflict situations.

49. Preventing and reducing armed violence is achievable, as demonstrated in communities, cities and States around the world. Effective prevention and reduction measures need to take certain key characteristics into account. Armed violence is often concentrated in specific areas or among particular groups in society. While parts of a country or city may function normally, other areas may be suffering from chronic high levels of armed violence. Peripheral, marginal and neglected regions such as border areas and urban slums are often vulnerable to the growth of informal and predatory power structures that use violent means to achieve their ends. A community security approach is most useful because, when combined with survey and assessment work, it allows assistance to be properly targeted at the subnational level, where the need is greatest. In this connection, the emerging practice in United Nations peacekeeping of "community violence reduction" should be noted.[15]

50. Different forms of violence can be causally linked and can be mutually reinforcing. The high incidence of gender-based violence, especially sexual violence, reported in some conflict zones shows how violence stemming from armed conflict is not confined to combatants, but routinely spills over into violence

[13] *International Peacekeeping*, vol. 16, No. 1, 2009, p. 137.

[14] See www.genevadeclaration.org.

[15] "Second generation disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) practices in peace operations: a contribution to the New Horizon discussion on challenges and opportunities for UN peacekeeping" (United Nations, 2010).

committed against civilians. High rates of criminal violence in a number of post-conflict settings also underline how the legacy of conflict can pose an ongoing obstacle to the sustainable return of individuals displaced by conflict as well as to reconstruction, peace and security and social cohesion. Different forms of violence require integrated policy and programmatic responses targeting specific risk and protective factors. However, it is also important to avoid treating forms of violence in isolation. Fragmented approaches that focus narrowly on conflict or crime may hinder the articulation of comprehensive strategies for the prevention and reduction of armed violence and the development of more coherent international, regional, national and local policies.

51. Armed violence is both a domestic and international security concern and can have regional and transnational dimensions. It can spread across territorial borders and trigger the large-scale displacement of people, as has been seen during clashes between rival pastoralist groups or among criminal groups that traffic arms from country to country. Organized criminal syndicates, diaspora groups and terrorist networks can also directly influence the local dynamics of armed violence.

52. The causes and consequences of armed violence are highly gendered. Across all affected societies, young males are the most common perpetrators of armed attacks, as well as the most likely direct victims. The phenomenon is deeply rooted in unequal sociocultural norms and in structural gender inequalities. It is of a particular concern in societies with a high percentage of young people combined with high youth unemployment. Recognition of the gendered nature of armed violence must inform policy and programmatic responses. If the gendered aspects of armed violence — including the male social roles that often shape armed violence and the structural subordination of women and girls in larger society — are not addressed, some of the key root causes of armed violence and its various impacts on girls, boys, women and men might be neglected.

53. In its resolutions 1325 (2000), 1820 (2008) and 1960 (2010), the Security Council emphasized that gender-based violence and sexual violence in particular were widespread in many conflict zones and that the perpetrators were seldom brought to justice. The victimization of women and children through gender-based violence, including rape, violence in the home and sexual exploitation, is an important and often underrecorded consequence of armed violence. The impact is felt most strongly at the family level, where children or women have to care for victims or become de facto heads of households. In situations where they have restricted access to livelihood opportunities, women and children struggle to provide for their families and often suffer from deepening levels of poverty, which may carry down into the next generation.

54. Although adolescents and young men may be its most prominent direct victims, younger boys and girls also suffer directly and indirectly from armed violence, including armed conflict. Children in particular are disproportionately affected by hostilities, both directly as victims and through their association with armed forces and armed groups. In that regard, I am pleased to note the adoption by the Security Council of its resolution 1882 (2009) and the enhanced engagement of its members in addressing grave violations against children. The addition of the killing and maiming of children and sexual violence to the criteria for listing parties to armed conflict in my reports to the Security Council is expected to strengthen the protective environment and to reduce the use of small arms against children. The

efforts of sanctions committees to include the targeting of children or women in situations of armed conflict as a criterion for targeted sanctions (see Council resolution 1857 (2008)) are also expected to have a positive effect.

55. The World Report on Violence against Children[16] indicated that violence in the community could take on frightening proportions where weapons were in wide circulation. The report recommended that States develop a comprehensive prevention policy to reduce demand for and access to weapons as a key action to reduce environmental factors that contribute to violence against children in the community.

Prevention and reduction of armed violence

56. Just as there is no single cause of armed violence, there is no single solution. Armed violence prevention and reduction programmes must take a wide range of risk and resilience factors into account and must engage all relevant stakeholders. The current efforts to contain and reduce armed violence are generally carried out by military and policing institutions, public health and education agencies or civil society organizations that focus on conflict prevention, peacebuilding, transitional justice and community development. However, programmes are not always based on a solid diagnosis of the problem or comprehensive evidence of what does and does not work. The second Ministerial Review Conference on the Geneva Declaration, to be held in October 2011, will provide an opportunity to further develop a more evidence-based approach to armed violence reduction programmes.

57. With a view to addressing armed violence in conflict and post-conflict settings, peacekeeping and peacebuilding activities should include armed violence reduction as a priority goal, including the provision of alternatives for young people who are most at risk of joining gangs or militias. The United Nations system has been working to ensure that armed violence reduction and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes are more closely integrated, so as to reduce the risk that ex-combatants will jeopardize fragile peace processes and to ensure that the weapons in circulation in societies are better managed.

58. After an open debate of the Security Council on post-conflict peacebuilding held in 2010 (see S/PV.6299), the Council noted that illegal trafficking in arms could constitute transnational threats with an impact on the consolidation of peace in countries emerging from conflict (see S/PRST/2010/7). It is important that illicit arms flows be identified as an immediate threat to peacekeeping and peacebuilding; it is equally important that wide-ranging policy responses be developed, as underlined in my report on peacebuilding in the immediate aftermath of conflict (S/2009/304). Such responses include the effective deployment of peacekeeping forces; the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants and persons associated with them; the provision of support for women's participation in peacebuilding institutions and initiatives (see S/2010/466); and the promotion of the rule of law, including security sector reform. It is also necessary to develop longer-term arms control measures; encourage reconstruction efforts; promote community security; establish an enabling environment for Government service delivery,

[16] Paul Sérgio Pinheiro, *World Report on Violence against Children* (Geneva, United Nations Secretary-General's Study on Violence against Children, 2006).

economic performance and employment opportunities; and invest in decentralized dispute resolution mechanisms that help to prevent armed violence.

59. Furthermore, international financial institutions have gained considerable experience in armed violence prevention and reduction and have recognized the importance of promoting development and economic enterprise in ways that mitigate armed violence. The World Bank has established a conflict, crime and violence unit to support its efforts to enhance the resilience of States and societies in withstanding armed violence. Many of these interventions explicitly support evaluation, planning and capacity at the national and municipal levels to reduce collective and interpersonal violence. The Bank's *World Development Report 2011: Conflict, Security and Development* is expected to provide further assistance in establishing the importance of such approaches.

60. Member States have undertaken a range of interventions to address armed violence. Many Governments have favoured enforcement-led activities that include strong military and police actions and punitive legislation. In other settings, prevention activities have been introduced, emphasizing incentives alongside punishment and deterrents. Successful activities tend to combine enforcement-led actions, such as enhanced policing, with voluntary and prevention-based programmes that address structural and proximate risks and enhance the resilience of people and communities in the face of armed violence.

Use and misuse

61. The issue of small arms covers not only production, trade, stockpiling and diversion, but also their use. For public officials, the United Nations Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials serve as a good example of a standard agreed upon within the United Nations which may guide training and capacity-building, including in post-conflict settings.[17]

62. Efforts to encourage compliance with agreed norms should not target just Government officials because it is not only Government personnel who are bound to ensure that their use of arms is lawful; international humanitarian law addresses the behaviour of armed groups as well.[18] In recent years, humanitarian actors, including the International Committee of the Red Cross, have, with some success, engaged in dialogue with non-State armed groups to enhance their respect for international humanitarian law and encourage them to refrain from using anti-personnel mines and from recruiting children as soldiers. Several armed groups around the world have made weapons-related commitments ranging from pledges to restrict the use of arms of specific concern and to take precautionary measures regarding the use of force and firearms to commitments to ensure the basic security and safety of arms and ammunition stockpiles. While little is known about the implementation of such commitments, it should be monitored more systematically with a view to gaining a better understanding of their possible impact on the protection of civilians in armed conflict (see S/2009/277).

[17] Adopted by the Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, held in Havana in 1990.

[18] See the 1949 Geneva Convention and the Protocol additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the protection of victims of non-international armed conflicts (Protocol II), concluded in 1977.

III. The Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects

63. The first three United Nations meetings under the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, adopted in 2001, had limited results. Two consecutive biennial meetings of States, held in 2003 and 2005, ended without substantive outcome documents. The same was true for the first United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme, held in 2006. However, the third and fourth biennial meetings of States, held in 2008 and 2010, succeeded in producing action-oriented outcomes that provided guidance for national, regional and international efforts and cooperation (see A/CONF.192/BMS/2008/3 and A/CONF.192/BMS/2010/3).

64. At both meetings, States underlined the need to enhance cooperation among national institutions and to implement effective legislative and control frameworks. Cross-border cooperation, in particular with regard to tracing requests, was further discussed. Improving the effectiveness of cooperation and assistance remained a central theme.

65. In the outcome document of their 2010 meeting (contained in A/CONF.192/BMS/2010/3), States recommended that a comprehensive assessment be undertaken of progress made under the Programme of Action in the 10 years following its adoption, as an input for the Second Review Conference of the Programme of Action, to be held in 2012. Which entity should undertake that assessment was not specified. In the relevant resolution following the meeting (General Assembly resolution 65/64), it was indicated that the assessment was to be carried out by States themselves.

66. States agreed on a new type of meeting under the Programme of Action, namely, an open-ended meeting of governmental experts to address key implementation challenges and opportunities relating to particular issues and themes, including international cooperation and assistance. The expert meeting, which will be held from 9 to 13 May 2011, is to focus on marking, record-keeping and tracing with regard to small arms.

67. In my 2008 report, I informed the Council that, in implementing the Programme of Action, some States had established and revised national legislative frameworks; integrated small arms action plans into national development strategies; worked on weapons collection and destruction programmes; improved their stockpile management; and entered into international cooperation and assistance. States have continued to make progress in all those areas. They have further improved the security of stockpiles and destroyed surplus weapons, often with assistance provided by the United Nations in partnership with donors, regional organizations and civil society. Some States have integrated small arms action plans into national development strategies or otherwise expanded their approach to the issue. A growing number of States have increased transparency by reporting their small arms transfers to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. However, national reporting under the Programme of Action has remained at a low level in some regions, and national reports often do not clearly identify the challenges in national implementation and how they could be overcome. Moreover,

effective operational information exchange between States' investigative and law enforcement authorities and between States and INTERPOL could be further improved.

68. The recommended measures at the regional level contained in the Programme of Action have led to some promising regional initiatives to curb the illicit trade in small arms, especially with respect to norm-setting. An important recent example is the 2010 Central African Convention for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons, their Ammunition and all Parts and Components that can be used for their Manufacture, Repair and Assembly. More efforts are needed to reflect these initiatives in national legislation and procedures. Where resources have been made available, regional organizations have been able to make a real difference on the ground; technical support and assistance has often been provided through programmes, initiatives and projects of United Nations funds, agencies and centres. These partnerships ensure synergy and the effective use of resources.

69. In my 2008 report, I mentioned a number of factors impeding the full implementation of the Programme of Action and its International Tracing Instrument at the national, regional and global levels, including the fact that neither is legally binding; the absence of measurability, concrete benchmarks and cut-off dates; the lack of capacity in many Member States, in particular those most affected; and the detrimental debate on whether or not ammunition is included in the Programme of Action. In that report, I also informed the Security Council that the United Nations had embarked on an initiative to develop International Small Arms Control Standards in order to streamline United Nations-wide policymaking, programming and practice and to provide practical guidance for States and other stakeholders wishing to move forward on the issue. The development of the Standards is progressing well as a result of an inclusive process of consultation involving United Nations agencies, government experts, international and regional organizations, civil society and the small arms industry. The finalized standards will be presented at the Second Review Conference, to be held in 2012.

70. The points that I made in my 2008 report remain valid. Likewise, the particular challenge of coordination regarding the cross-cutting issue of small arms, which complicates the focused approaches set out in the Programme of Action, continues to exist. Small arms is a relevant category in such diverse policy fields as international security, human rights, public health, development, border controls and countering transnational organized crime. Member States may wish to consider further in what forum they expect most value added for concrete progress without creating duplication. For example, although improved border control measures regarding small arms might be introduced within the framework of the Programme of Action, addressing the subject in the expert environment of the World Customs Organization might offer a distinct advantage. Member States may also wish to determine how the newly established open-ended working group on firearms under the United Nations Firearms Protocol will relate to work carried out in the context of the Programme of Action.

IV. Observations and recommendations

71. Within the United Nations, coordination on the issue of small arms has improved markedly over the past three years. The strengthened United Nations

Coordinating Action on Small Arms mechanism has grown from 16 participating United Nations entities (in 2008) to 23 and has a multi-year strategy in place. The development of International Small Arms Control Standards and of international ammunition technical guidelines is progressing well. In addition, States are being provided with such tools as a legislative guide, a technical guide and a model law on the United Nations Firearms Protocol, a Web-based clearinghouse on small arms,[19] a new reporting template for the Programme of Action and a coordinated approach to matching needs with resources.[20] Additional improvements are still needed, including the further development of integrated solutions for small arms control and armed violence reduction in the context of peacekeeping and peacebuilding. Perhaps the most important issue requiring structural attention is how to encourage States to ensure the adequate exchange of operational information among their respective law enforcement or investigative authorities regarding the illicit trade in small arms. The United Nations stands ready to assist States in building capacity to that end.

72. My 2008 report contained a set of recommendations, on which progress has been made.

73. With respect to the recommendations concerning improved data collection and measurability, a number of stakeholders have done important work, in particular within the framework of the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development. United Nations partners have made significant progress on research regarding small arms policy and practice, including the disaggregation of data by gender and age.

74. The recommendations on integrating small arms action plans into national development and peacebuilding frameworks and on the general need for international assistance and cooperation continue to be of value. The development plans of Burundi and Guinea-Bissau are good examples of such integration efforts. International cooperation and assistance have continued at the bilateral, regional and global levels, often supported by United Nations agencies, country offices and regional centres.

75. The recommendations aimed at improving the management of arms embargoes, including the further development of synergies among peacekeepers, sanctions monitoring groups, Member States, INTERPOL (regarding tracing activities) and those carrying out disarmament, demobilization and reintegration efforts, remain important guidelines for action by States.

76. The negotiations in the context of the United Nations process towards an arms trade treaty are expected to cover the recommended improvement of end-use verification by States.

77. In the present report, I have attempted to build on my previous recommendations and have raised issues of particular concern in the light of our increasing understanding and knowledge of the issue of small arms in its wider context. In that regard, the following recommendations may merit the attention of the Security Council.

[19] Programme of Action Implementation Support System; see www.poa-iss.org.

[20] See www.poa-iss.org/MGE/Documents/Index/Assistance-Proposals-BMS4-2010.pdf.

Recommendation 1

The tracing of small arms in conflict, post-conflict and conflict-prone situations is a key tool for identifying points of diversion of arms and ammunition and, as a result, areas in which the security of stockpiles and shipments needs to be improved. States rarely trace weapons in such situations. The Security Council may wish to encourage States to strengthen their tracing capacity and to enhance international cooperation regarding tracing in these contexts, including with the United Nations.

Recommendation 2

In post-conflict weapons collection programmes, weapons should be recorded in sufficient detail to ensure accountability and to facilitate their tracing in the event of diversion. Record-keeping systems should be designed in such a way as to ensure that personnel are aware of the types of information that they need to record, including ammunition markings. The International Small Arms Control Standards currently being developed by the United Nations will provide practical guidance in this regard. The United Nations Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards may be developed further, drawing on the International Small Arms Control Standards, to specify the basic requirements with regard to record-keeping systems and adequate training for their use.

Recommendation 3

Expert groups monitoring arms embargoes may be aided in their work if they have basic information at their disposal regarding the ammunition marking practices of States. The Security Council may wish to encourage Member States to provide the United Nations, on a voluntary basis, with public information on the markings applied to ammunition for small arms and light weapons by manufacturers under their jurisdiction, as well as the markings on ammunition recovered from illicit use.

Recommendation 4

It appears that unsecured or poorly monitored national ammunition stockpiles account for a substantial percentage of the global diversion into illicit markets, a key factor in the prolongation and escalation of armed conflict, as well as in terrorism, crime and other forms of armed violence. They are also an important source for the assembly of improvised explosive devices. The destruction of surplus arms and ammunition is cost-effective when compared with the costs of properly securing and maintaining stockpiles, and should be pursued vigorously by States, United Nations country teams and peacekeeping missions. The Security Council may wish to encourage States to apply, on a voluntary basis, the international ammunition technical guidelines once they are finalized.

Recommendation 5

In order to effectively combat armed violence in conflict, post-conflict and conflict-prone settings, peacekeeping and peacebuilding activities and development assistance require planning for armed violence reduction as a

priority. In such contexts, it is vital that traditional arms control measures be integrated into interventions that target the demand for weapons and enhance the ability of security providers and governance authorities to strengthen community security, manage conflict and mitigate violence. In this context, there is a continued need to develop measurable goals on armed violence prevention and reduction to be achieved by 2015.

Recommendation 6

In line with my 2009 report on the protection of civilians in armed conflict (S/2009/277), the Security Council may wish to further identify ways to increase compliance by non-State armed groups with international norms relating to the use and stockpiling of weapons and ammunition in times of conflict.